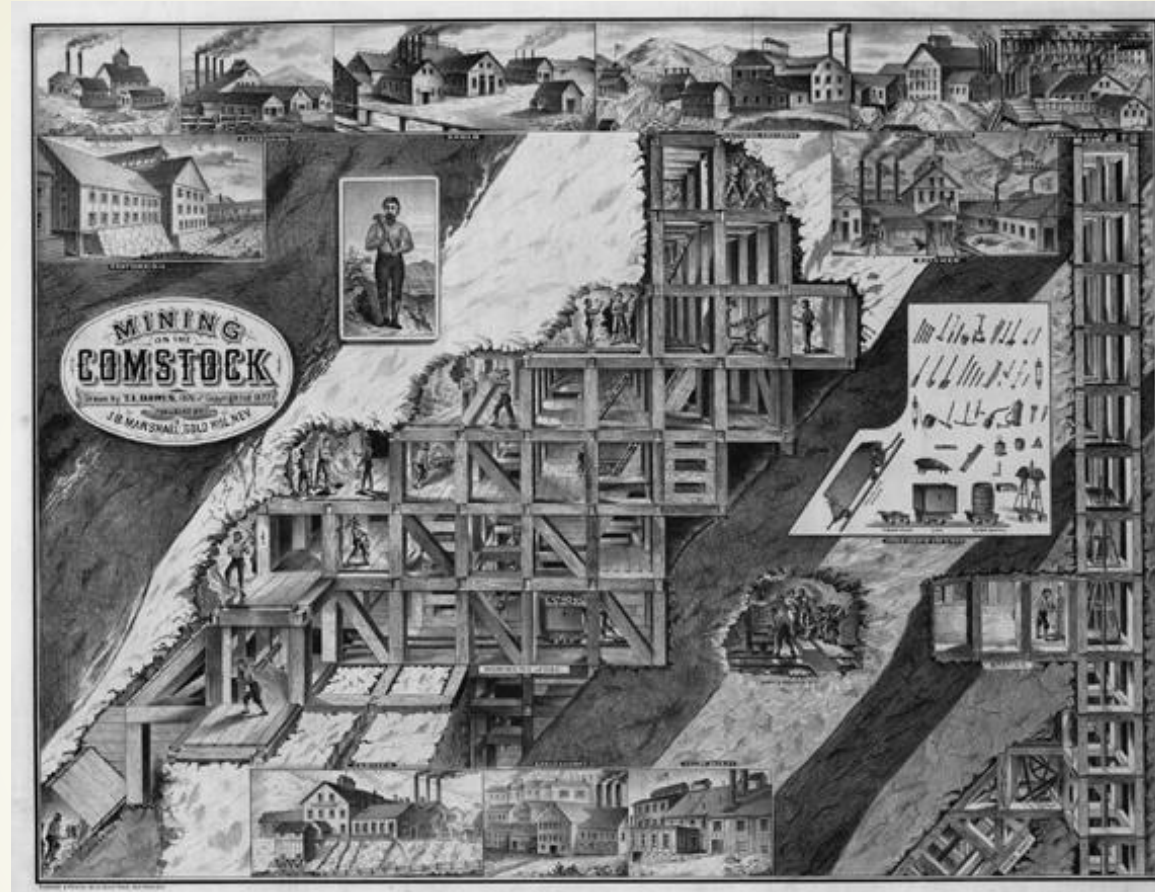




Settling the Western Frontier

Miners, Ranchers, Farmers, Soldiers, and Pioneers Dispossess Indians of the Land




Part I. Miners and Ranchers

Westward Migration in the late 19th Century

The California Gold Rush of 1849

A NEW AND MAGNIFICENT CLIPPER FOR SAN FRANCISCO.
MERCHANTS' EXPRESS LINE OF CLIPPER SHIPS!
Loading none but First-Class Vessels and Regularly Dispatching the greatest number.
THE SPLENDID NEW OUT-AND-OUT CLIPPER SHIP



CALIFORNIA
HENRY BARBER, Commander, AT PIER 13 EAST RIVER.

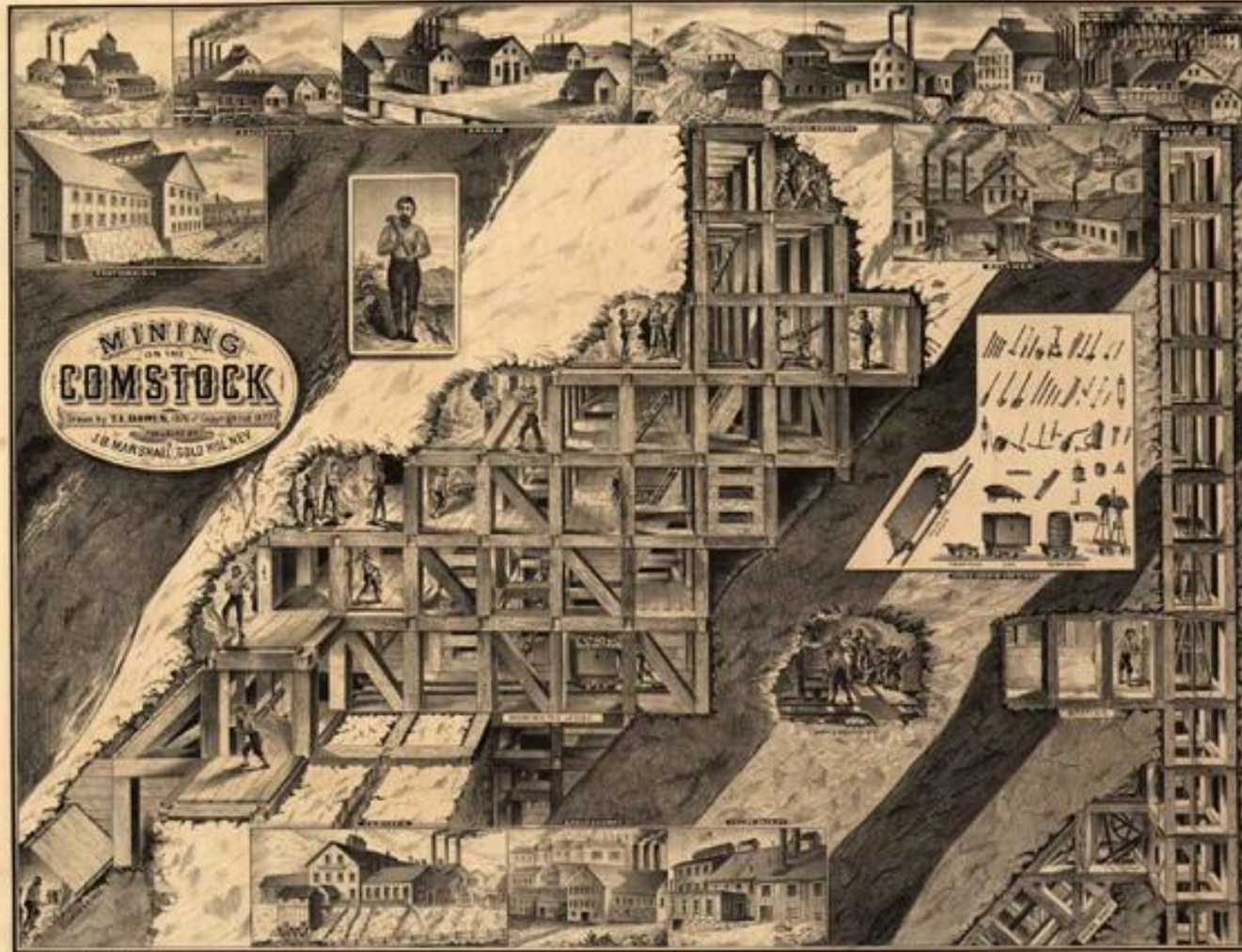
This elegant Clipper Ship was built expressly for this trade by Samuel Hall, Esq., of East Boston, the builder of the celebrated Clippers "SURPRISE," "GAMECOCK," "JOHN GILPIN," and others. **She will fully equal them in speed!** Unusually prompt dispatch and a very quick trip may be relied upon. Engagements should be completed at once.

Agents in San Francisco,
Messrs. DE WITT KITTLE & CO. }
RANDOLPH M. COOLEY, 88 Wall Street, Tontine Building.

NEBBUT & CO., PRINTERS.

The original flood of westward migrants surged into California in 1849 – a year after James Marshall had discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in California. Miners came from across the United States, but also from China, Japan, and Mexico, hoping to strike it rich. Very few did.

The Comstock Lode - 1857



Discovered by Henry Comstock in 1857, this vein of gold in Nevada would eventually produce over \$300 Million in gold and silver – and that was in 19th Century money. It would be much more today. Unfortunately for Henry Comstock, the man who discovered the lode and for whom it was named, he sold the plot to a mining company for around \$13,000. A small fortune, but nothing compared to the value of this treasure.

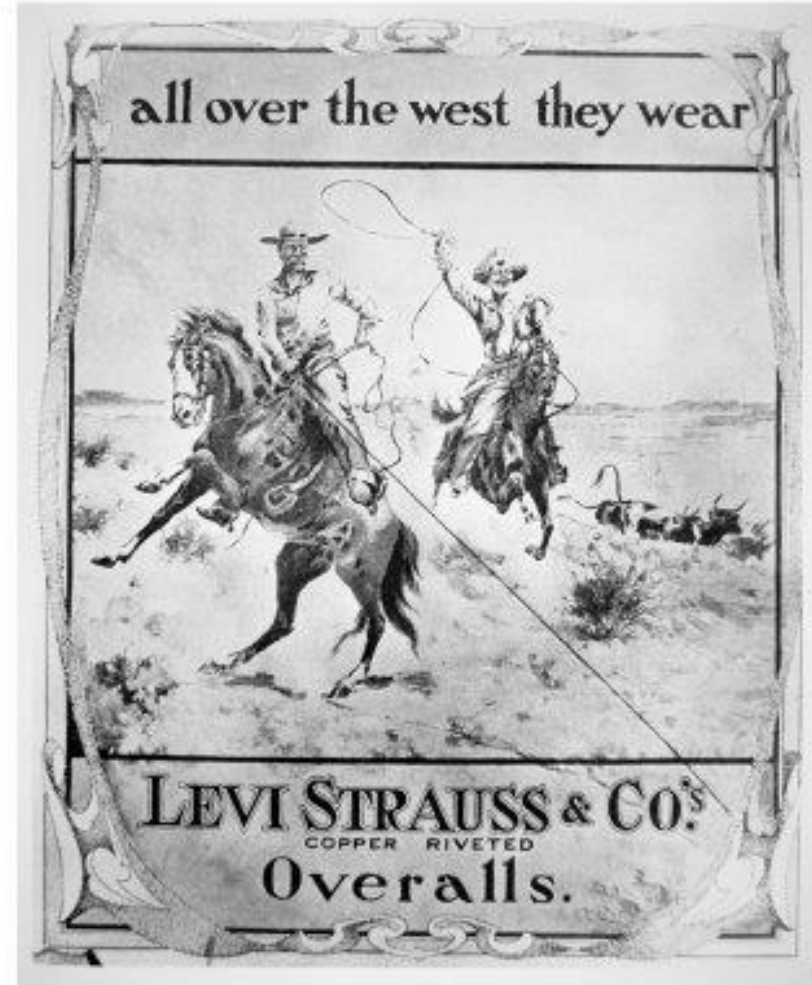
Vigilance Committees – Vigilante Justice



Vigilance committees, or vigilantes, were men who took justice into their own hands in the West. Because most mining or ranching communities were thousands of miles away from the agents of the federal government – or even the military – men had to take the law into their own hands. Horse thieves and robbers were dealt swift punishment, and no judges or juries presided over the hearings. Often enough, mistakes were made and innocent men died at the hands of vigilantes in the West.

Very few men struck it rich...

Most men who went to the West searching for quick profits and wealth came back East empty handed, although a few got lucky. The most consistent winners, though, were businessmen. The hotel owners, the operators of the restaurants and saloons, and the entrepreneurs who offered men the goods and services they needed to live comfortably were the ones who made profits. Opening a dry goods store, selling picks and shovels - or even selling miners a good pair of jeans - might make a man rich. It worked for Levi Strauss, founder of the Levis jeans company in California.



Mining Regions in the West



MINING REGIONS OF THE WEST

States which prospered due to the mining industry:

California

Nevada

Arizona

Idaho

Montana

Wyoming

Colorado

North Dakota

South Dakota

Cities like San Francisco, CA grew rapidly due to the growth of mining communities, as did Denver, CO, Virginia City, NV, and Deadwood, SD. The Western states were populated by miners who hoped to strike it rich – and the people who served them lunch, or sold them boots.

The Open Range

The Open Range was the unoccupied land on the South Plains where thousands of longhorn steer – cattle to you and I – roamed in an unfenced grassland. Most had escaped the Spanish many centuries before. Although many Americans had a taste for beef, the transportation costs were too high before the 19th Century brought the railroads to the West.

When the railroads arrived, cowboys drove huge herds of steer north to the railroad depots – where they were loaded onto cattle carts and sent to slaughter.



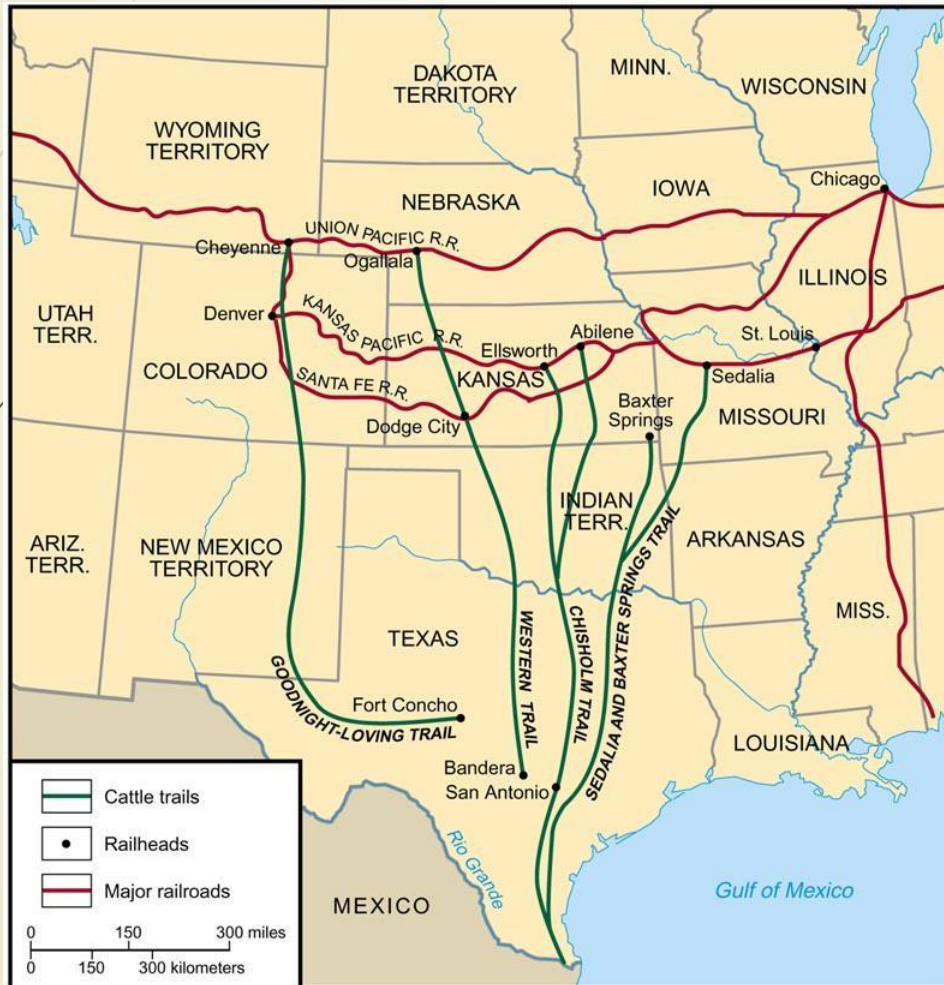
Cowboys drove herds from the open range towards “cownowns” along the railroads in the 19th Century, where they were loaded up and sent to slaughter in the East.

The Long Drive



Cattle drives, or “long drives” generally involved a dozen or more cowboys, horses well trained for the task at hand, dogs that would stand up to the animals, and huge herd of longhorn steer. They were dangerous, especially when weather or Indians interrupted the drive, or when stampedes occurred.

Major Cattle Trails of the West



CATTLE TRAILS

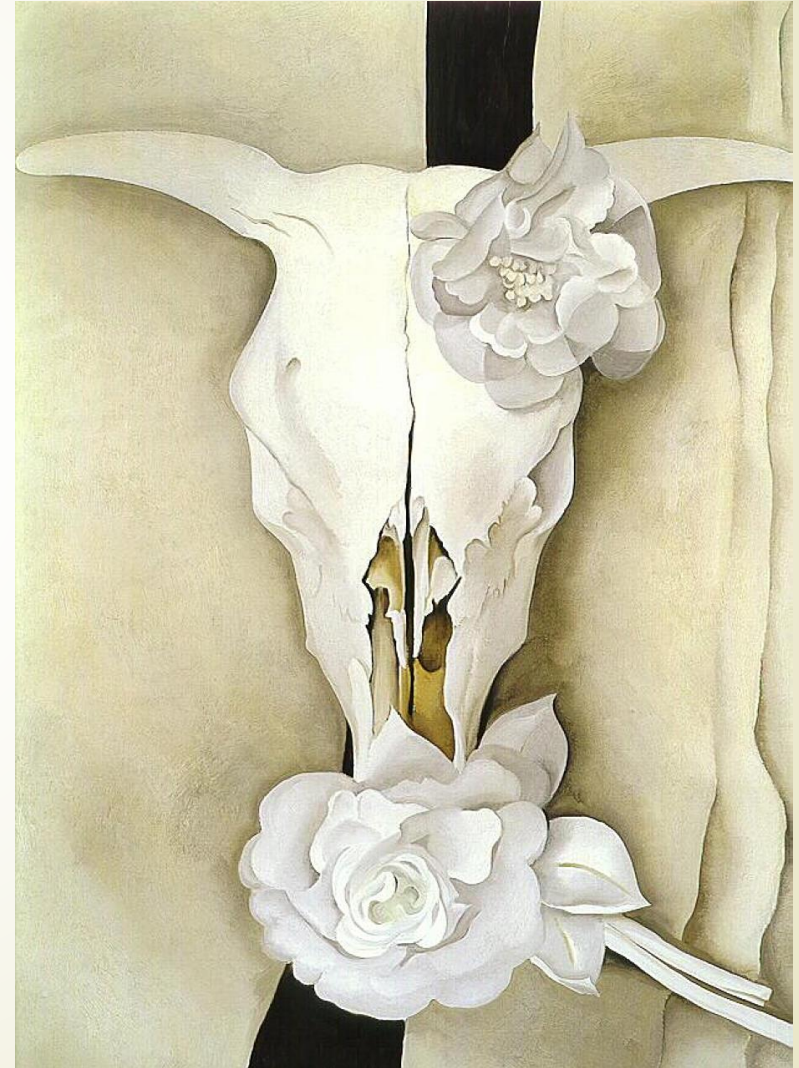
- The Sedalia Trail
- Baxter Springs Trail
- The Chisholm Trail
- The Great Western
- Goodnight-Loving Trail

The Death of the Open Range

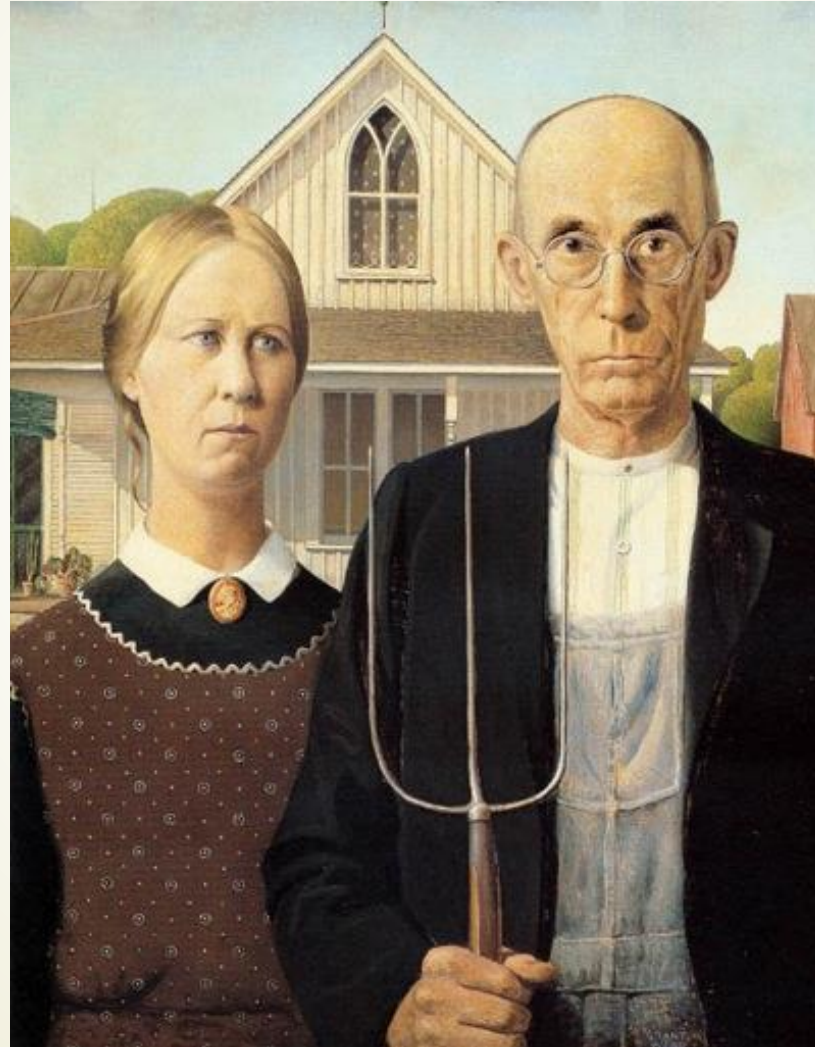
The Open Range came to an end for a variety of reasons. Drought and hard winters took their toll. Farmers put up barbed wire fences. Finally, the railroads expanded so far – and into so many regions – that no major cattle drives were required any longer.

Still, the “Open Range” period – when cowboys drove herds of cattle across the open range, are a large part of the shared history of Americans. Films, an entire genre of Westerns in particular, celebrate the cowboy lifestyle, even as they tend to gloss over many of the details.

In reality, cowboys were a very diverse group of men, and the period of the “Open Range” was short lived.



Farming on the Great Plains





The Soil of the Great Plains

The soil of the Great Plains was fertile, but arid, dry, and thin. Once the land was plowed and the thick sod removed, the land could easily turn to dust – in dry years, soil erosion was common. Years of soil erosion and plowing would eventually lead to terrible dust storms.

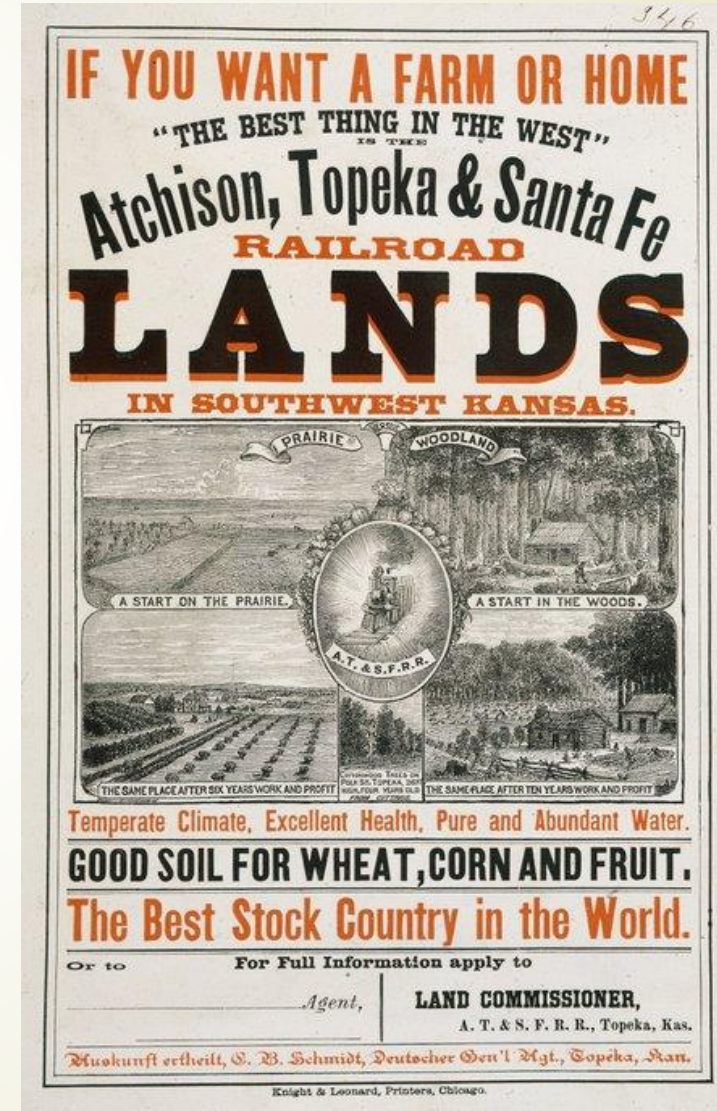


Sod Houses

Due to the lack of trees and wood with which to construct houses, many homesteaders built their homes of sod. Dirt houses were better than no houses at all. Resources were so scarce in Nebraska, the first settlers were called “Bug-eaters.”

Railroads Advertised the Land as Far as Europe.

- Railroad companies wanted to see residents in the vast Northern Plains of America. Travelers and farmers shipping freight would give them customers. And customers meant profits.
- Even as far away as Europe, companies advertised the cheap land available in the United States. Often, they exaggerated the fertility of the land and the availability of credit; however, European immigrants came to the West, and settled the Great Plains.
- Railroad companies were constantly trying to attract new customers. Indeed, the National Park System was largely encouraged by companies seeking to promote rail travel among tourists.



The Homestead Act - 1862



Originally, the Homestead Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln. Although he was terribly preoccupied by the conduct of the Civil War, Lincoln thought ahead to the post war years. He hoped that Americans would quickly populate the region between the Mississippi River and the West Coast. The coast was fairly well populated; however, very few had moved onto the Great Plains.

The Homestead Act of 1862

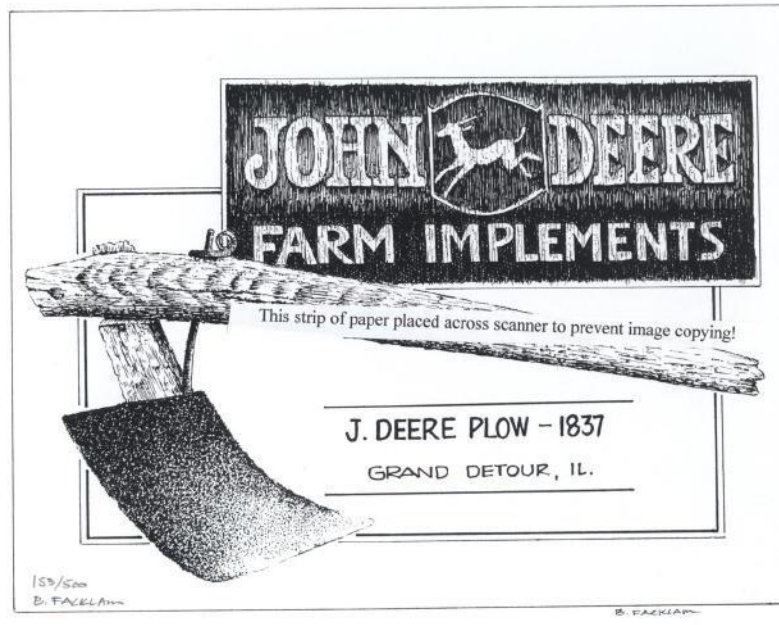


Homesteaders in a sod house – note the grass and vegetation growing on the roof!

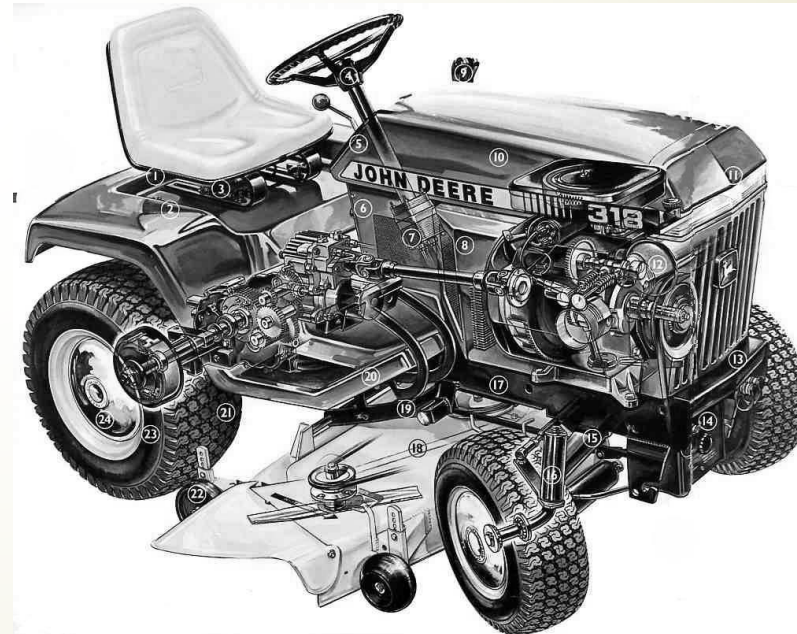
The Homestead Act, passed during the Civil War, was meant to encourage Americans to move West and populate the Great Plains and Midwest. The act offered 160 acres of free land to anyone who would live on the land – and improve the land by building a home, a barn, or cultivating crops – for a period of five years. Although many thousands of homesteaders sought to take advantage of the government deal, very few succeeded in becoming prosperous.

John Deere's Inventions

The Steel Plow



The Modern Day Tractor



“Exodusters”: Freedmen Move West

All Colored People
THAT WANT TO
GO TO KANSAS,
On September 5th, 1877,
Can do so for \$5.00

IMMIGRATION.

WHEREAS, We, the colored people of Lexington, Ky., knowing that there is an abundance of choice lands now belonging to the Government, have assembled ourselves together for the purpose of locating on said lands. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:— Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar (\$1.00), and this money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in instalments of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise as may be desired.

RESOLVED, That this Colony has agreed to consolidate itself with the Nicodemus Towns, Solomon Valley, Graham County, Kansas, and can only do so by entering the vacant lands now in their midst, which costs \$5.00.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall consist of seven officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees. President—M. M. Bell; Vice-President—Isaac Talbott; Secretary—W. J. Niles; Treasurer—Daniel Clarke; Trustees—Jerry Lee, William Jones, and Abner Webster.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall have from one to two hundred militia, more or less, as the case may require, to keep peace and order, and any member failing to pay in his dues, as aforesaid, or failing to comply with the above rules in any particular, will not be recognized or protected by the Colony.



“Exodusters”

Many African-American freedmen came to view themselves as “Exodusters” during the post-Reconstruction years. Like the Israelites in the Book of Exodus, they were able to escape slavery, cross a vast body of water, and, with the help of God, survive their time in the desert...

The story of Exodus in the Bible describes how the Israelites escaped slavery in Egypt – with Moses leading them out of Egypt – crossing the Red Sea when God parted its waters – and surviving in the desert as God provided mana from heaven.

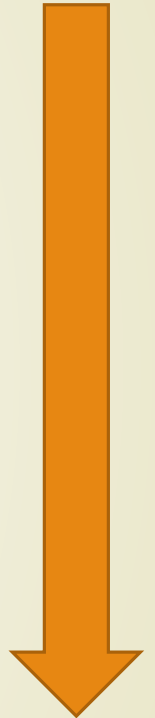


Overproduction



Low Prices!

- ▶ Farms failed for a variety of reasons during the 19th Century, including drought, flooding, or poor luck.
- ▶ Even excellent and successful farmers, though, had a difficult time during the late 19th Century, due to overproduction of crops. This led to a drop in prices, and hard times for farmers.
- ▶ Part of the reason farmers were unable to make a profit even during bountiful harvest years were a result of the high interest loans they owed to banks and the high shipping cost railroads charged. Banks and railroads were genuinely resented by Western farmers.



Closing the Frontier

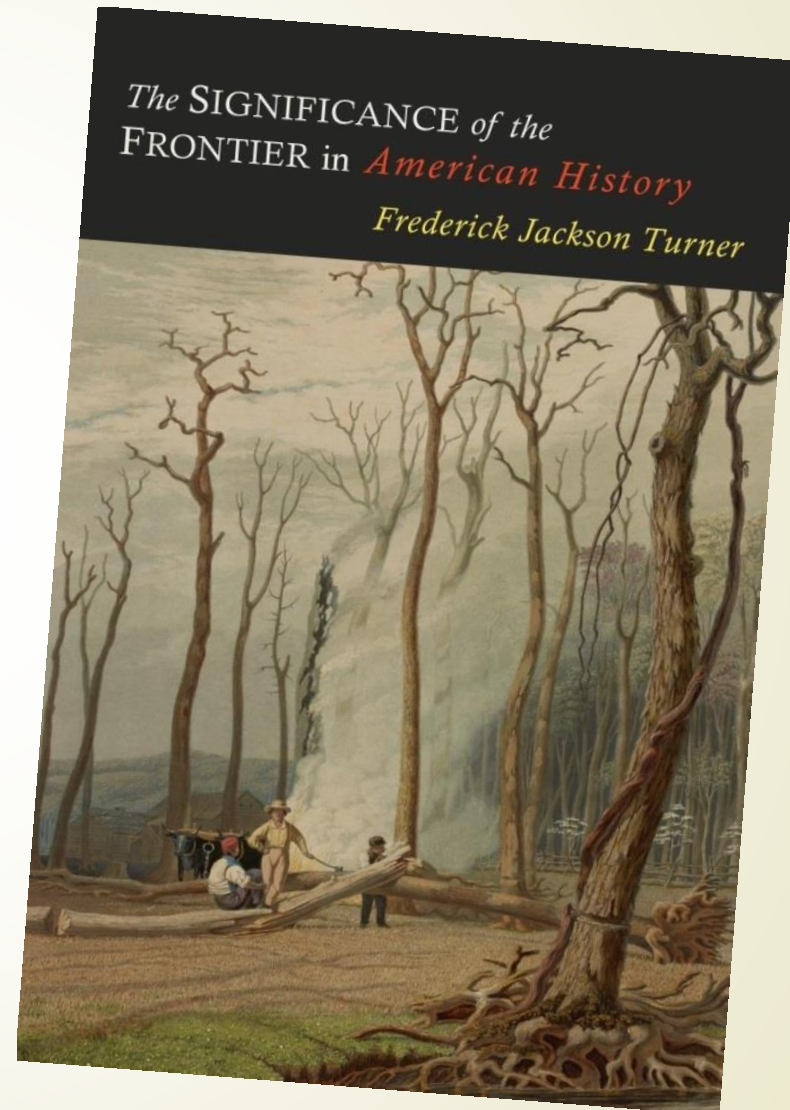
- ▶ Throughout American history, from the signing of the Treaty of Paris to until the end of the 19th Century, there had always been unsettled land to the West – or at least land which Americans had not settled yet. In 1890, the US Census Bureau announced that there really was no more unsettled land between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific... The Frontier was officially closed!



The “Closing of the Frontier” simply meant there were no areas of the continent which were unoccupied by Americans. The dream of Manifest Destiny had come to fruition.

Frederick Jackson Turner

The “Turner Thesis” had argued that the Frontier was a region which helped Americans develop its distinctive, democratic culture. Because frontier life was so difficult, people had to learn to cooperate and respect one another to survive. The thesis certainly had some merit. However, given the frequent wars against Indians and Mexican-Americans – not to mention the shootouts between ranchers and farmers and miners all competing for the same resources, the so-called Turner Thesis was debunked over time.





Westward Expansion, War, and the Dispossession of Native Americans



Native American Population, 1865: **Historians estimate 360,000, most of whom lived on the Great Plains.**

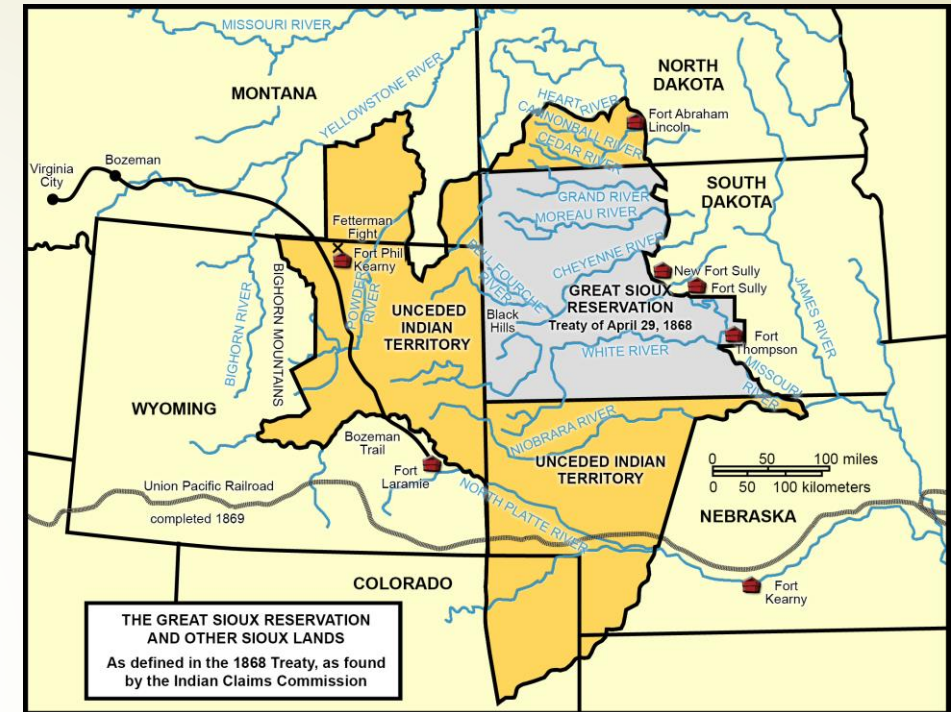
In 1492, when Christopher Columbus accidentally stumbled upon what Europeans called "The New World", historians estimate that there were between 10 Million and 100 Million Native Americans inhabiting North and South America. Due to virgin soil epidemics and brutal warfare, by the 1800s, there were fewer than 1 Million Native Americans.

Great Plains Nations Lifestyles, 19th Century



Most of the tribes of the great plains lived nomadically, traveling from region to region depending upon the seasons. They established agriculture and cultivated fields in several regions of the Plains, and relied upon the buffalo as a source of food, shelter, and tools. They were also elaborate and sophisticated traders. Most Americans today fail to recall that Plains Indians were accomplished marksmen and horse riders as well, having secured the stray and runaway horses lot to the Spaniards centuries earlier.

As Americans came increasingly into contact with Native American tribes due to the successes of the Homestead Act and the Transcontinental Railroad, the nomadic nature of their lifestyles was a point of enormous conflict with sedentary settlers who defended property rights with their lives.



Native Americans who agreed to the Fort Laramie Treaty believed that by allowing safe passage to American settlers, they were guaranteed tribal lands into the future. But the American government did not honor the treaty.

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 – Renegotiated in 1868

Originally signed in 1851, the Laramie Treaty was the first effort of the United States to end the nomadic lifestyle of the Plains tribes. The government promised tribes that if they would adopt a sedentary, agricultural, lifestyle, the US Government would protect their lands for “as long as the grass shall grow.” The Treaty would be renegotiated in 1868, and eventually abandoned by the United States government as more and more settlements were established in the West.

Americans quickly broke the Fort Laramie Treaty, as miners and settlers flooded into the region. Native American leaders opted to leave the reservations in protest.

Pike's Peak Gold Rush



Settlers to Points West



The Mankato Massacre, 1862

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/479/little-war-on-the-prairie?act=0#play>



EXECUTION OF THE THIRTY-EIGHT SIOUX INDIANS

AT MANKATO, MINNESOTA, DECEMBER, 26, 1862.



The Sand Creek Massacre of 1864

Indian haters attacked Native Americans indiscriminately and brutally throughout this period, and Native Americans responded in kind – violence was an unfortunate reality in the West. In response to a murder by a group of Arapaho Nation warriors in 1864, Col. John Chivington of Colorado led a massacre against the Cheyenne, who played no role in the incident and were under the protection of the United States government at the time – by treaty. The view that “the only good Indian is a dead Indian” was held by many in the West, and it had murderous consequences in this instance.



Buffalo Soldiers

Made a part of our popular historical knowledge by the soulful Bob Marley and the Wailers – buffalo soldiers played a troubled and ironic role in American history. Although they were denied their full citizenship rights in the United States and subjected to violence, they nevertheless fought to support mostly white American settlers and to confine Native American tribes to reservations. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eksV02us5DQ>

African-Americans, who had been denied freedom for centuries, now played a crucial role in robbing Native Americans of their freedom. Many must have had mixed feelings and empathized with Native Americans nations.

The Formerly Enslaved Buffalo Soldiers Native Americans on the Reservations






Buffalo Skulls, circa 1870

Native Americans of the Great Plains relied on the buffalo for food, water, and shelter. They followed the buffalo seasonally, and were dependent upon the animal for sustenance. The U.S. Government came to the logical conclusion that they could end the nomadic lifestyle of Native American tribes – and cause them to become sedentary farmers – by killing off the buffalo.

WANTED!
Dry Buffalo Bones,
And All Other Kinds of BONES,
Tanking, Horns, Hoofs,
Rags, Scrap Iron, Old
Metals, &c., &c.



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A. B. MAYER,
Wholesale and Retail Dealer and Manufacturer of
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Anchor Fertilizing Works,
Foot of Harrison Street, ST. LOUIS, MO.
FRED. MAYER, Manager.

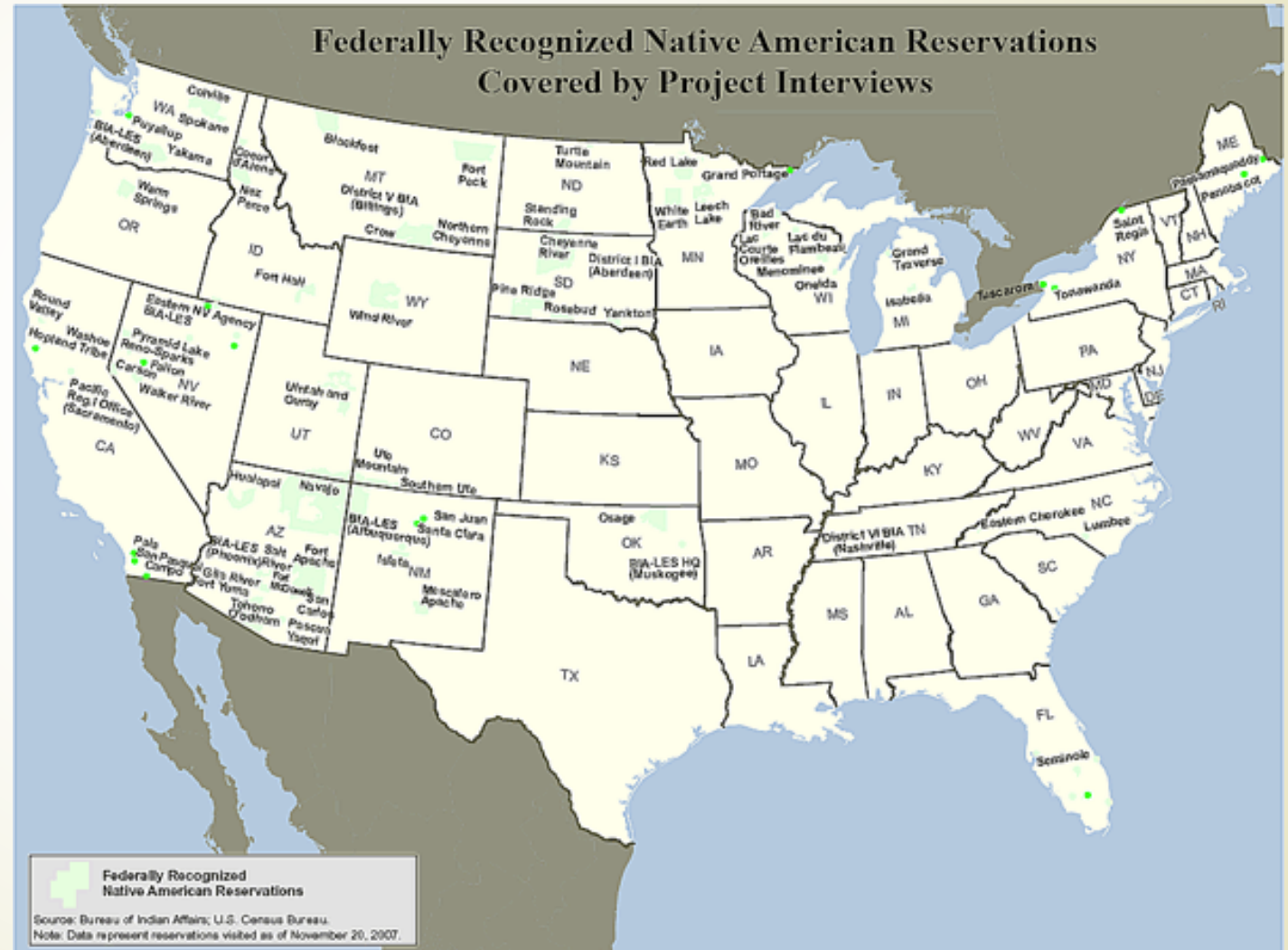


The Slaughter of the Buffalo – Hide Collectors

Because the buffalo was a food source for nomadic Native Americans and an inconvenience for the Great Railroad companies spanning ever westward, they were systematically slaughtered during the late 1800s. Passengers on trains shot at the animals and left the carcasses to rot in the fields. Buffalo hunters took thousands of animals a month for their hides. Between the end of the Civil War and the early 1880s, over 30 million American bison were indiscriminately slaughtered for their hides.

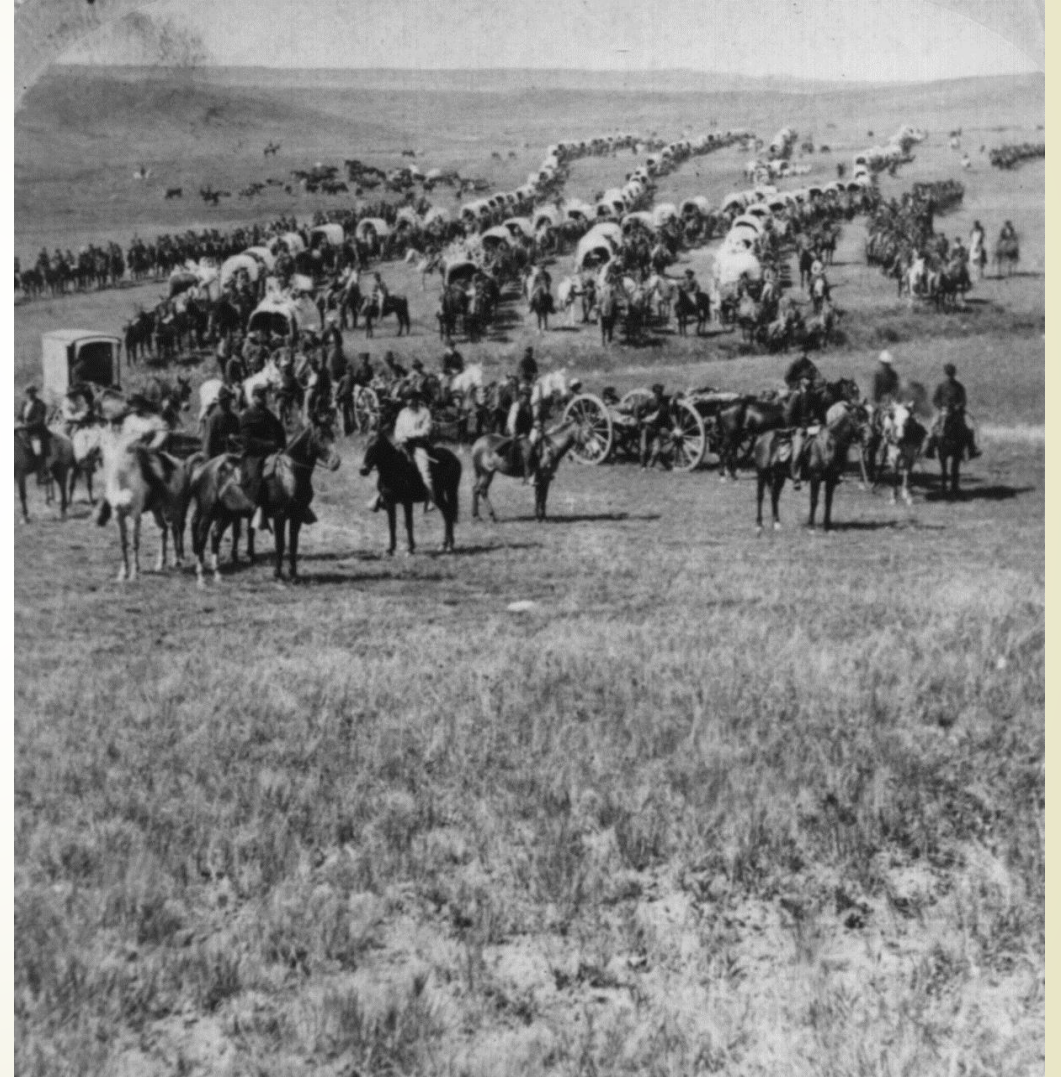
The United States Reservation Policy for Native Americans

Tracts of land which were set aside to be occupied by Native Americans were called reservations. For the most part reservations lands were infertile and without natural resources. Where natural resources, minerals, oil, or other profitable industrial potential emerged, Americans simply repossessed the land and relocated the tribes. While the Native American communities on these reservations had nominal autonomy and sovereignty according to the Constitution, their rights were frequently violated.



Dakota Territory

A gold strike in Dakota Territory during the year 1874 resulted in a flood of miners onto reservation lands. Chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were incensed that the United States would not fulfill its treaty obligations, and left the reservation after repeated attacks against the white transgressors were rebuffed. While several of the conflicts between the Sioux tribe and the white settlers had resulted in bloodshed, the cycle of violence was just beginning in 1874.





The Battle of Little Bighorn

Native Americans call the conflict the Battle of the Greasy Grass. During this encounter, General George Armstrong Custer and the Seventh Cavalry, numbering perhaps 270 troops, attacked an encampment of 10,000 Sioux and Cheyenne. They were massacred. The news reached American towns just before the Centennial Celebration of Independence Day, 1876. But while the victory was crushing a complete in the short term, in the long run it would redouble the resolve of Americans to confine Indians to the reservations. Little Bighorn was the last major victory for Native American tribes in on the Western Frontier.



The Battle of the Greasy Grass: Custer's Last Stand

A Native American artist's rendition of Crazy Horse's vision... Soldiers falling backwards into the camp. Although this was an overwhelming victory for the amalgamation of Native tribes who were present at the time, it was the beginning of the end for Native American agency. Within a year of this bloody battle, Americans had redoubled their efforts to enforce the reservation policies and made independence or agency on the Great Plains virtually impossible for tribes hoping to continue the nomadic lifestyle of their ancestors.

US Soldiers Graves, Little Big Horn





**The Native American Memorial for the
Battle of the Greasy Grass**

Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce



After refusing to withdraw to the reservations of the Pacific Northwest, Chief Joseph led a bloody, heroic retreat from American forces, attempting to escape the jurisdiction of the US Army and join Chief Sitting Bull in Canada. Captured and forced to surrender near the Canadian border, Chief Joseph's final statement of surrender and resignation still evokes emotion.

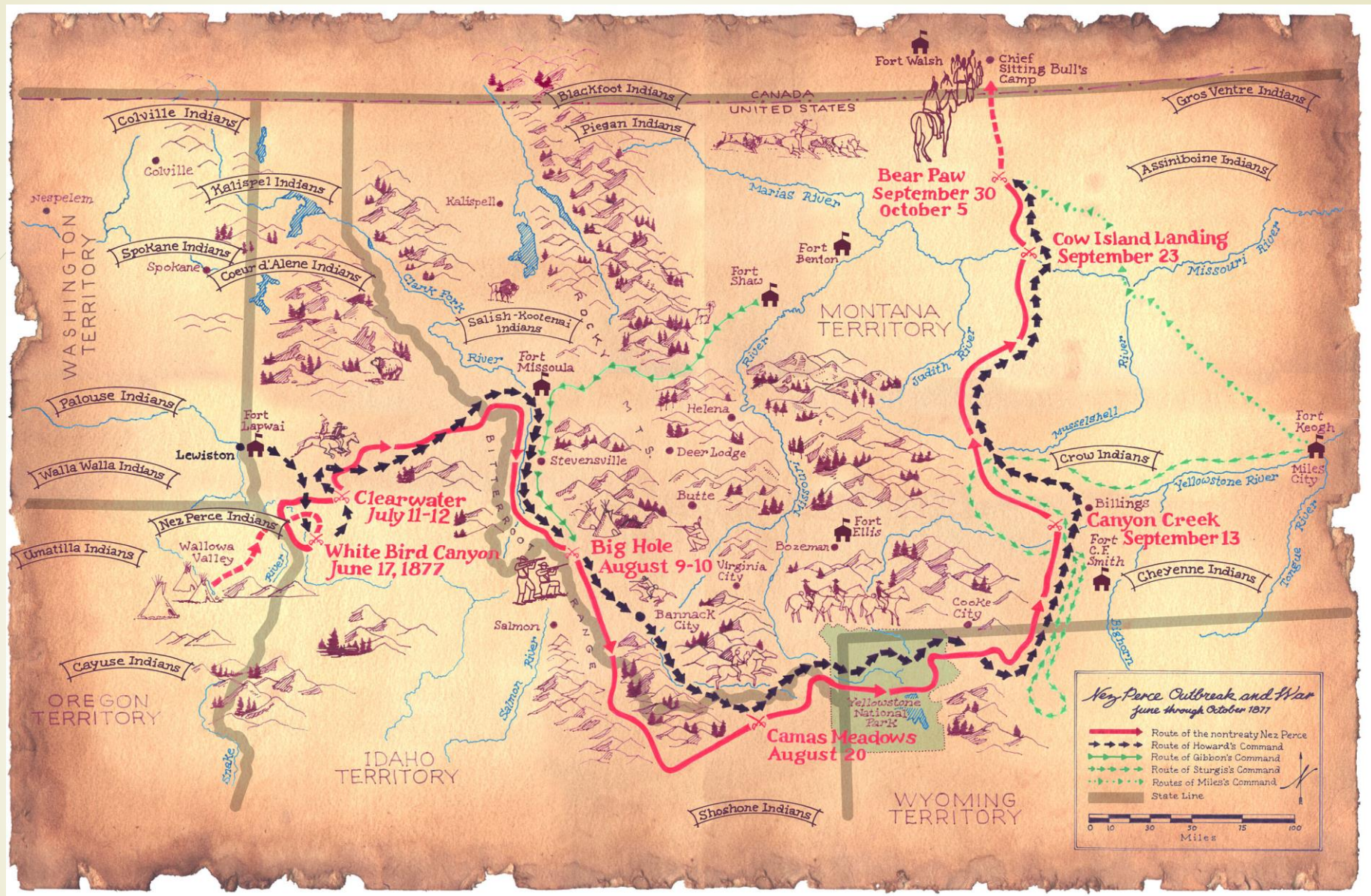
Chief Joseph



“The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are--perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.”

- Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce

How well the surrender speech of Chief Joseph was recorded and translated is a topic of much debate among historians. He didn't speak English, of course...



Nez Perce Retreat from the Wallowa Valley to the Canadian Border



Geronimo

The Apache Geronimo maintained a fierce resistance to the United States Army's reservation policy throughout the 1880s, escaping captivity and terrorizing the Southwest repeatedly. Eventually, he was captured and imprisoned by the Army. He ended up in the custody of the United States Army, and recounted his biography to S.M. Barrett – who translated it for him. As with Joseph, translations of Native American speeches might be misinterpreted – willfully misinterpreted at times – by American translators.



The Wounded Knee Massacre

In 1890, the Sioux tribe participated in a new and enthusiastic ritual known as the Ghost Dance. Led by the Prophet Wovoka, the dance was believed to be powerful spiritually – so powerful that its members could defy bullets, that lost warriors and buffalo would rise from the dead, and that a great landslide would wipe out the white settlers who had injured the Plains.



The Wounded Knee Massacre – Hundreds of Sioux Tribe members were killed in the clash between the Army and the Native Americans were buried in a mass grave. Soldiers had their portraits made after the massacre.

During the winter of 1890, police officers and US Army personnel in and around Wounded Knee, SD were frightened by the ceremony, and intervened to arrest Chief Sitting Bull. In a standoff, he was shot to death. Angry Sioux tribe members petitioned the US Army for an explanation – then shots were fired. Within a few minutes, machine guns were used against the sparsely armed tribe, and over 200 tribesmen died.

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME

OF
YOUR OWN

EASY PAYMENTS



PERFECT TITLE

POSSESSION

WITHIN
THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED
IRRIGABLE

GRAZING

AGRICULTURAL
DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.	Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.
Colorado	5,211.21	\$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	\$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT **350,000 ACRES** WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: Bakersfield Colton Imperial Idaho Lemoore Kings Merced Napa Redwood	MINNESOTA: Ancker Montana: Crow Agency BERKELEY: Hay Napa Winters	NORTH DAKOTA: Fort Totten Fort Yates OREGON: Astoria Cannon Beach Clatsop Dufur Hood River Portland Rainier Seaside	OKLAHOMA—Gen. Soc. and Fox Agency Shawnee Wendover OKLAHOMA: Barnes Barnes Agency Pawnee Rush Springs Tulsa	SOUTH DAKOTA: Cheyenne Agency Crow Creek Guthrie Lower Brule Pine Ridge Sioux Falls Sisseton	WASHINGTON: Fort Simcoe Fort Spokane Idaho Tulsa WISCONSIN: Oconto
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WALTER L. FISHER,

Secretary of the Interior.

ROBERT G. VALENTINE,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

The Dawes Act of 1887

The goal of the Dawes Act was to force Native Americans to adopt a more "American" way of life – through the adaptation of sedentary agricultural practices, the education of children, and conversion to the Christian Faith. Sadly, many children were taken from the parents and their heritage and raised in American conversion schools. Moreover, Native American tribes accustomed to the sharing of land and resources were forced to accept plots of land and the concept of personal property rights. Any land unclaimed by the tribes was auctioned off at low prices to white settlers.

Helen Hunt Jackson

A Century of Dishonor was the first major history produced by an American historian to chronicle the copious lies, broken treaties, duplicitous activities, and dishonorable dealings of the United States government with Native Americans. Jackson described the condition of Native American tribes by the late 19th Century, and gave a sympathetic view of what many Americans were already calling “a dying race” – The Native American Indian.

